

CLAIMS:

5 1. A seat belt buckle assembly, the assembly having: a webbing strap, an end piece defining a slot to receive the webbing strap and a buckle, the buckle having a slot to receive the webbing strap; the webbing strap having a first portion extending through the slot in the end piece and secured to the main part of the webbing strap and a second portion passing through the slot in the buckle
10 and secured to the main part of the webbing strap, one said portion being stitched directly to the main part of the webbing strap and the other portion being stitched to the combination of said one portion and the main part of the strap, with stitching passing through the main part and the two portions of the strap.

15 2. An assembly according to Claim 1 wherein the slot in the end piece and the slot in the buckle each have a width less than the width of the strap, portions of the strap being tucked in the region of each slot, the stitching connecting the said other portion to the combination of the first end portion and the main region of the strap extending only through three super-imposed layers of strap.

20 3. An assembly accordingly to Claim 2 wherein the stitching securing the said other portion to the combination of the first end portion and the main part of the strap is of rhombic form.

25 4. A seat-belt buckle assembly according to any one of the present claims further comprising a connector, the connector having an elongate element and at least one mounting element connected to or formed integrally with the elongate element for pivotal movement relative to the elongate element, the or

each mounting element being resiliently biased to a predetermined position relative to the elongate element, or each mounting element being mounted on the buckle, the said second portion of the strap passing around at least part of the connector, and where it is superimposed over the main part of the strap,
5 being secured thereto so that the superimposed regions of the strap embrace the said elongate element.

5. An arrangement according to Claim 4, wherein said resilient bias between the or each mounting element and the elongate element is effective to
10 move the buckle to an initial position in which the axis of the buckle is substantially perpendicular to the axis of the elongate element.

6. An arrangement according to Claim 4 or Claim 5, wherein said resilient bias is effected by at least one resilient biasing element.

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7. An arrangement according to Claim 4 or Claim 5, wherein the elongate element is formed of metal sheet, one end of the elongate element forming a loop which receives a rod which is pivotal relative to the elongate element, the rod extending to and being connected to arms which extend from part of the
20 mounting element, the mounting element being constituted by a mounting plate, there being at least one resilient biasing element engaging the elongate element and a said arm to impart said bias to the mounting element.

8. An arrangement according to Claim 7, wherein the or each said resilient biasing element comprises a helical spring surrounding said rod.

25 9. An arrangement according to any one of claims 4 to 8, wherein said connector defines the slot present in the buckle.

10. An arrangement according to Claim 4 or Claim 5, wherein the or each mounting element and the elongate element are each formed from a single length of bent resilient wire.

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11. An arrangement according to Claim 10, wherein the elongate element is defined by an elongate loop of said wire extending between a pair of hook-shaped formations, each said hook-shaped formation defining a respective mounting element for engagement with the buckle.

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12. An arrangement according to Claim 10, wherein the region of said wire forming the elongate element, and the region of said wire forming the, or each, mounting element are joined by a, or a respective, helically wound region of said wire, the helically wound region of wire providing said resilient bias
15 between the, or each, mounting element and the elongate element.

13. An arrangement according to any one of Claims 10 to 12, wherein said second portion of the strap passes through an aperture in the buckle and around said the or each mounting element.

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14. A method of assembling a seat belt buckle assembly having a webbing strap, an end piece defining a slot to receive the webbing strap and a buckle defining a slot to receive the webbing strap; the method comprising the steps of: passing one end portion of the strap through the slot in the end piece;
25 passing the other end portion of the strap through the slot in the buckle; securing a first end portion of the strap to the main part of the strap using stitching and subsequently securing the second end portion of the strap to the combination of the one end of the strap and the main piece of the strap using

stitching, the stitching passing through the main part and the two portions of the strap.

15. A method according to Claim 14 wherein the strap is wider than each of
5 said slots, the method comprising the steps of tucking in parts of the strap
adjacent each slot and performing the first stitching in a region where there are
only two super-imposed layers of strap and performing the second stitching in a
region where there are three super-imposed layers of strap.

10 16. A method according to Claim 14 wherein said first end of the strap is
passed through the slot in the end piece and the other end of the strap is passed
through the slot in the buckle.

15 17. A method of any one of Claims 14 to 16 wherein after superimposing
said one portion and the main body portion of the strap, the adjacent edges of
the superimposed strap portions are secured together to define a central pocket,
the method including the step of inserting an elongate element of a connector
into the pocket, superimposing the other portion of the strap over at least part of
the main body portion of the strap, and securing the said other end portion of
20 the strap to the said main body portion of the strap to embrace the elongate
element.